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27 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Registration of Objects in Outer Space

REFERENCE : State Department S/S Cable No. 3556, dated
26 April 1962

1. The referenced cable raised serious questions as to our present announced policy of registering only those satellites which remained in orbit at the time of registration. Actually it is my understanding that at the Special Group meeting two weeks ago it was agreed that we would include all vehicles which were put in orbit and that Dr. Charyk would work out the details of the exact information to be given.

2. On 27 April I discussed this matter with Dr. Charyk and Alexis Johnson who indicated that the following was our proposed plan:

a. The U. S. would register with orbital data all satellite bodies which remained in orbit at the time of registration.

b. At the same time the U. S. would register all satellites which had been placed in orbit but which had returned. However, in this case the orbital data would not be provided.

c. As an added touch to cause some counter-embarrassment for the Soviets, the U. S. will register all satellite launchings which fail to achieve orbit.

d. There will be no statement committing the U. S. to register all satellites in the indefinite future. However, if questions are asked about whether the present list is complete, one will be able to answer "yes" but again no commitment will be made that this will always be the case.

3. With respect to paragraph 5 of the referenced cable which deals with Soviet insistence on banning military reconnaissance satellites,

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I concur that this is likely to become an increasingly thorny problem. I do not believe that the proposal that this should be considered in the disarmament context is necessarily a sound one. I believe we should continue to strongly uphold the position that this is not a military action. We should never agree that this is the type of activity which we might consider renouncing in the course of disarmament negotiations. In fact, observation satellites are in themselves a strong measure in favor of disarmament since they tend to limit the dangers from unknown enemy capabilities.

[SIGNED

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